

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01  
MCT-01 AID-05 EUR-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /069 W  
-----107326 251411Z /43

O 251350Z NOV 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3394  
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES 8910

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: AR, SHUM, SOPN  
SUBJECT: VOA CORRESPONDENT DETAINED BY ARGENTINE POLICE

REF: BUENOS AIRES 8893

1.- VOA LATIN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT AL ORTIZ WAS DETAINED FOR SEVEN HOURS (3PM TO 10 PM) NOVEMBER 24 BY ARGENTINE POLICE WHILE INTERVIEWING THE FAMOUS "MAD MOTHERS" AT THE PLAZA DE MAYO. A BBC CORRESPONDENT, WHO ACCOMPANIED ORTIZ TO THE PLAZA, WAS ALSO DETAINED. THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD GAVE THE STORY FRONT PAGE PLAY WHILE ALL OTHER LOCAL PAPERS DID NOT MENTION THE INCIDENT. ORTIZ USED THE TOURIST PASSPORT WITH WHICH HE HAD ENTERED THE COUNTRY NOVEMBER 21 FOR IDENTIFICATION. HE NEVER PRESENTED HIS U.S. OFFICIAL PASSPORT BUT DID EXPLAIN TO THE POLICE VOA'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

2.- THE TWO WERE QUESTIONED (MOSTLY TOGETHER) AT THE SECOND POLICE PRECINCT BY SEVERAL UNIFORMED AND PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS ABOUT THEIR EMPLOYERS, TRAVEL HABITS AND OPINIONS ABOUT ARGENTINA AND ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION, THEY WERE NOT MISTREATED OR BODY-SEARCHED.

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3.- AT 9:40 PM THE TWO CORRESPONDENTS WERE PRESENTED WITH

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UNCLASSIFIED

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny  
Exemptions(s):  
Classify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full DECLASSIFIED  
( ) Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to  
Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

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A HANDWRITTEN STATEMENT WHICH SAID THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN TO THE POLICE STATION FOR PURPOSES OF IDENTIFICATION. ONCE IDENTIFICATION WAS VERIFIED, THE STATEMENT SAID, THE POLICE LET THEM GO WITHOUT TAKING ANY FURTHER ACTION. THE STATEMENT DID NOT USE THE TERMS DETAINED OR ARRESTED TO DESCRIBE THE CORRESPONDENTS' STATUS WHILE AT THE POLICE STATION. AFTER DISCUSSING IT FOR A FEW MINUTES BOTH CORRESPONDENTS AGREED TO SIGN THE STATEMENT SINCE THEY DID NOT CONSIDER IT TO BE COMPROMISING IN ANY WAY.

4. THEY WERE RELEASED AT 10 PM AND IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED THE EMBASSY. ORTIZ LATER FILED A STORY ON HIS DETENTION WITH VOA.

5. POL COUNSELOR IS LUNCHING WITH ESPECHE GIL TODAY TO BE GIVEN REPLY ON OUR PEREZ/FROIO INQUIRY, AND USIS PRESS OFFICER BEING CALLED AGAIN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY LATER THIS AFTERNOON (SEE REFTEL).  
CASTRO

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NNN

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